

Toc H Journal

Letters and articles are welcomed and are printed as individual points of view, and are not necessarily those of the Movement

Principal Contents — May 1954

Page

FORWARD TO SWANWICK	142	Editorial Comment
GILBERT WILLIAMS	143	by Mayne Elson
A START at LLANELLY	145	by John Jones
FAR CRY	148	by Geoff. Martin
A SUGGESTED EMBLEM	151	Ruislip Branch
MULTUM in PARVO	152	much in little
'OLD HOUSE' at CAIRO	153	by John Whetten
FATE, TV and the 'BARBER'	156	Eastern Evening News
The ELDER BRETHREN	157	Roll of Honour
DESTINATION POPERINGHE	158	a monthly link
"PASS, FRIEND"	158	by Barclay Baron
REDISCOVERING TOC H—5	160	by Mayne Elson
BANNERS—1	163	Folkestone Branch
BRANCH BRIEFS	164	from all quarters
WARDEN MANOR 21st BIRTHDAY	165	by Elsie Burgess
A BAG of BOOKS	167	reviews and comment
OPEN HUSTINGS	171	Readers' letters

Cover Picture :

'SAFE WITH MUM'

Empire Windrush survivors find a temporary home at Toc H, Little Bay Camp, Gibraltar (see article Far Cry on page 148)

(Photograph by courtesy of Illustrated)

Editorial Office: Toc H, 47 Francis St., London, S.W.1

Telephone: VIctoria 0354

Forward to Swanwick

SOON after this number of the JOURNAL has reached readers, the 126 members of the Central Council will be setting out from all parts of Britain to attend its thirty-third Annual Meeting. Held again this year at The Hayes, Swanwick, in Derbyshire, from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon they will be living in the pleasant atmosphere of a large country guest-house. But this will be no lazy or even restful week-end, for a very full Agenda confronts them.

Under the heading of 'Special Business' first place is rightly given to the Report of the "Forward" Committee. This is the direct outcome of a motion moved at last year's Council meeting which said:

Realising that Toc H is a frontier movement and not a fortress, a joyous adventure and not an institution, the Central Council instructs the Central Executive:

That a 'forward committee' be set up

- (a) *To examine every part of the framework of the Movement in the light of its task at the present time.*
- (b) *To report on any part thereof that no longer has power to call men to that task.*
- (c) *To recommend any changes which will ensure that it continues to be level with or in advance of contemporary experience and thus may competently challenge men to believe in and seek the true purpose of life.*

Since then, a committee of eight men, widely differing in age, outlook and experience, has together bent minds to give effect to the motion. Helped by a synopsis of the opinions expressed by leaders in the Areas, in seven meetings they have taken a broad and objective view of Toc H today. Their Report is itself a tribute to the purposeful way in which the task has been accomplished and the Family owes them a debt of gratitude for the achievement.

It still remains for the Central Council to decide how far their conclusions and recommendations are acceptable. Although the 'Main Resolution' forms an essential part of our Movement, Toc H has never been greatly smitten by resolutions, as such. The words, themselves, can have little force or power until implemented by working members. Then, and then only, can the bare bones live.

Gilbert Williams

An 'open letter' received from MAYNE ELSON, South-Western Area Secretary, in which he pays further tribute to a much-loved colleague.

DEAR EDITOR.

THE COUNTLESS MEMBERS who knew and loved Gilbert must indeed be grateful to Tubby for his fine appreciation in your March issue; and Herbert Leggate's address at the Memorial Service in All Hallows was also deeply satisfying to those who heard it. For others to whom Gilbert Williams may be only a name, might I be allowed to add a little more about the positions he held and the work he did?

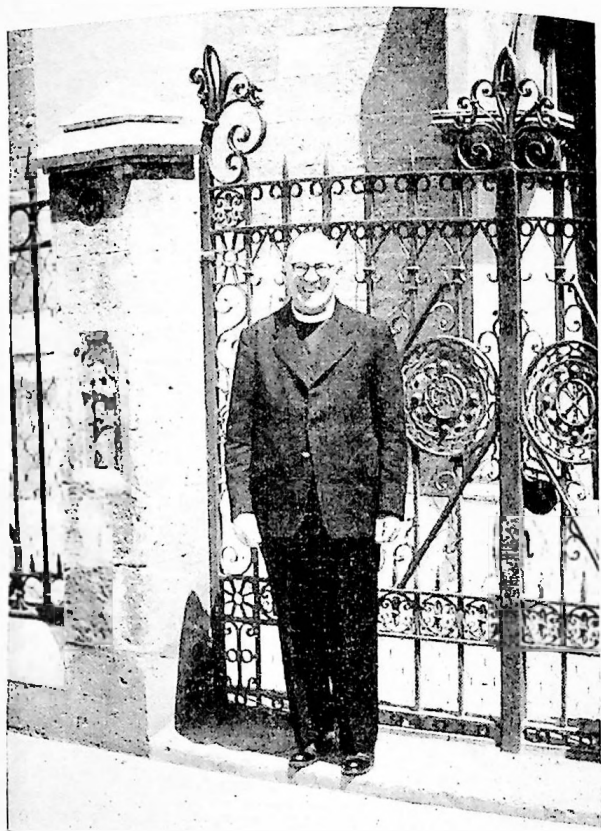
Through the mill

Gilbert was no 'office-wallah'—he went right through the Toc H mill before he was exalted to Francis Street to perform administrative duties. As Tubby has recorded, he first came into the Movement as a member and Hon. Padre of a new group at Tunbridge Wells. He joined the staff before Areas were created and spent two years at Sheffield prior to setting out for South Africa and Canada. Returning in 1928, he became Padre to the South Eastern Area (afterwards renamed Kent, Surrey & Sussex) where he remained until 1934, later going to Southern London and Oxford & Thames Valley for two years each. He occupied a seat on the Central Executive almost continuously from 1931 to 1942, after which he was an Administrative Padre until his illness and retirement from the Staff in 1950. During the war years he not only slept in Marks but as Chairman of the Central Houses Committee he closely supervised them all, in London and the provinces, during a most difficult period in their existence; and he was a familiar figure to thousands of Servicemen in St. Stephen's Toc H Services Club opposite the House of Commons.

County Cricket

After his illness, which made it necessary for him to spend each winter aboard, Gilbert cast about for other ways in which he might serve God and his fellow men. He loved cricket and, being a member of the Somerset County Cricket

Club, he would spend most of each summer watching their matches. He soon became, quite unofficially, the club's chaplain and the friend and adviser of many of the players. When there was a suggestion that he might stand for election



GILBERT LLEWELLYN WILLIAMS
1886—1954

to the Committee he decided against it, because he felt that if he accepted a position of authority he might forfeit the confidence of some members of the team. He was a little diffident about this work and needed occasional reassurance

that it was of value; but if county cricket is an industry, Gilbert made himself into an excellent industrial chaplain.

Abiding Memory

With all his friendliness, his charm and his endless generosity, perhaps one's most abiding memory is of a man who lived so close to God that although he could be saddened, he never could be shaken. His gentle and gracious 'Missus' (as he always called her) lingered long in her last illness, during part of which she could scarcely recognise or speak to him; but neither then nor later did Gilbert ever lose his serenity or his smile, and he set us all a great example of fortitude and faith. He and his Missus were indeed "lovely and pleasant in their lives" and when he too passed over one's first thought was, how happy they must be again together!

Exeter.

MAYNE ELSON.

A Start at Llanelly

Here is an account by JOHN JONES, Area Padre for Wales, telling how one new unit came to be started. We look forward to printing further stories of recent Toc H extensions.

A QUIET MORNING in this old Welsh town, famous for its pulpits, tinsplate, rugby football and at least one Cabinet Minister, seemed guaranteed by the rain. What else to do but sip coffee or browse in the market or visit the bookshop? But I reckoned without my friend Bill Williams.

Bill happens to be one of those cheerful souls who believes in two things—Wales as a Northman sees it, and Toc H. His basic ideology is that Wales would be in a bad way but for the vigilant stewardship of the North, and he seemed confirmed in his conviction by discovering that here was a considerable South Wales town—without the intelligence to possess a Toc H Branch. The submarine view of the place we were then enjoying, through the rain-washed windows of the tea-shop, was proving too much for his ardent soul. He propounded the theory that the way to keep dry on a wet

morning in a strange town was to assume that people were kind to strangers and give them a chance to prove it.

Within the next couple of hours we had visited the Y.M.C.A., Montague Burton's, a Specialist in Gent's Ties, a General Draper's and the Vicar.

At the Y.M.C.A., we were told that soldiers passing through sometimes asked for Toc H and by it meant a Branch and not a canteen! But, in confidence, we must remember that the key-man in the town was the Vicar; we must not miss seeing him. We were both shy of vicars as a class, so we left the Y.M. and made for Montague Burton's instead. It was the nearest anyway and the rain was still generous hearted.

Man to see

We were given a great welcome by the official representatives of the firm, all three of them. They were politeness itself and when they found that we were looking for something not on the peg they were even more anxious to please. They told us that the man to see was the Vicar.

But we were in an unbelieving mood. The Vicarage was a long way off and the rain called for short sharp sprints. So this time we tried the Specialist in Ties. He was an artist in dark blue neckwear, with tiny golden saucepans scattered over them like stars. We both sighed at a vision of Wales beating the All-Blacks and the mighty crowds singing, *Sospan fach yn berwi ar y tan . . .* He was very interested in a Toc H tie Bill could show him, and that put an idea into his head. "Why don't you call on the Vicar?", he said.

Oddly enough the General Draper said the same after he found that Welsh flannel was much too prickly a subject for our taste. So to the Vicar we went.

He was kindness itself. At last we found someone who didn't know anything about Toc H. You could tell that by the questions he asked. He was most eager to learn! He and Bill had the time of their lives. I just sat back and marvelled at Bill. I didn't think he could talk like that. He seemed to have got it fixed in his mind that the Vicar was on the wrong beam, discussing the whole thing as a pious good-turn society. He wanted to make it clear that Toc H was a real Christian movement prepared to tackle vital issues, if the Vicar would help us to find the men. Bill's Northern speech gets husky when he's excited and now he crooned away most

seductively. Suddenly the Vicar smiled and offered to find ten men, a padre, and a room to meet in. He even offered us lunch but we generously declined. We didn't want him to think we were just a couple of grab-alls.

The first meeting, a month later, was nearly a flop. The Chairman, a gallant officer of World War One, was kindly, but sceptical. He told us the town was already well catered for; it possessed a British Legion, Rotarians and Freemasons. He couldn't see much room for Toc H and he himself couldn't do much to help; he was so busy. The Toc H speaker did his best, but the thirty or so men in the room were merely polite in a frigid kind of way. Then an old gentleman of benevolent aspect and uncertain antiquity arose in the middle of the audience and said in a voice like a roll of cannon: "Mr. Chairman, my friends of the Old Contemptibles Association sitting here beside me, wish me to put this resolution to the meeting. We propose that the Chairman dishes out the tea!" For a moment there was appalled silence. Then the gallant Chairman gave a most enchanting smile and accepted the proposition.

That cup of tea worked miracles. We found in the room an ex-jobmaster from Tavistock, a secretary from the Royal Navy, a chairman from the British Legion, a padre from the R.A.F. and fourteen men prepared to "have a go", including the Chairman who suddenly recalled that years before Tubby Clayton had shown kindness to his son, a lonely student in London.

Less than a year later Llanelly Branch received its Lamp.
J.I.J.

TOC H AND ALL HALLOWS ORDINATION CANDIDATES' FUND

This fund has been in operation for many years, and in all £6,000 has been distributed to Ordination candidates who are members of Toc H or who wish to be associated with it after their ordination.

The Committee would be glad to consider applications for assistance and if you know of anybody who is in need of such financial help ask them to write to the Rev. Norman Motley, 47 Francis Street, London, S.W.1.

Far Cry

Overseas Notes and News

EMERGENCY IN GIBRALTAR

IT MUST have been late on the Saturday night that the news first reached us in Little Bay that a troopship was on fire somewhere near Algiers. Naturally everyone was greatly concerned but at that stage it was not, as it were, a personal concern. Then more news began to filter through: the trooper was the *Empire Windrush*, homeward bound from the Far East with families as well as troops on board and Gibraltar was to stand by in case survivors were landed. That altered the situation considerably, the more so since Toc H was asked to prepare to receive the families at the Leave Camp. Plans were discussed by the Warden, Jock Brown, and Jim Flowers, Secretary of the Gibraltar Branch. There weren't enough beds to go round, but the Army would supply beds, sheets and blankets from store. The Army would also send rations and a cook. That was quickly settled and was really all that could be done for the present. For the rest, one could only wait on the dramatic events taking place 400 miles away.

Naval aid

On the following morning the Home Fleet, bound for England, left harbour at breakfast time and steamed slowly out of Algeciras Bay led by H.M.S. *Vanguard*.

We watched the ships pass Little Bay. Before the last had turned into the Straits two more destroyers, H.M.S. *St. Kitts* and *Saintes* appeared in a great hurry, throwing up impressive bow waves. Onlookers watching through the window while they breakfasted said, "Those destroyers are going to the troopship I bet".

They were right of course, and at midnight on the Monday H.M.S. *St. Kitts* returned to harbour with 200 men on board. Everyone who was anyone waited at the docks to meet them. Jock and Jim loaded the ancient Humber with tea and drove

down to warm the hearts of Brigadiers and lorry drivers. At about noon the next day the aircraft carrier H.M.S. *Triumph* came in with the main party of survivors, and during the afternoon the families who were to stay with us at the camp began to arrive in private cars.

Prams and cots

No one had any previous knowledge of the size or ages of the families but bedding details were discussed over a cup of tea. A sergeant and his wife arrived with their three children, a baby in arms, one of 18 months and one aged four. The mother said quietly that she had had the baby christened on the *Triumph* in case a fresh calamity should befall them, and they should not survive a second time. As they walked into the camp the eldest, holding his father's hand, looked up into his face and asked "Are we going to start a new home now Daddy?" "Yes son, we'll start again from the beginning. We're tough!" "Yes Daddy, we're tough aren't we?" But where could the baby be parked? Could we borrow a pram? An hour later a pram arrived in a car: "Thank you very much. Now I can put her down and leave her safely, while I sort out the rest of the family". Then an officer appeared with a cot for another child. More families arrived in cars. Women were treated with great consideration and gentleness until it transpired that some were not survivors but helpers, and those were then shown less consideration and instead were given a job to do.

The telephone rang repeatedly: the Army beds arrived and had to be erected and made up: the R.A.F. sergeant staying at the Camp helped his wife with the topping and tailing, for the smaller children were tired and needed settling down: his own small son entertained other children and let them fire his pistol: another helper coped with bottles and babies while parents got something to eat: as some families arrived others left to make personal purchases in the town. The shop-keepers rose to the occasion and "Survivors' discount" became the order of the day.

In the news

In the middle of it all Colin Wills, of the B.B.C. Television, introduced himself, having flown out from England in the early hours. He arrived too late to televise the arrival of the *Triumph* so came straight on to Little Bay. Jock showed

him the scene and he thought he could get some sufficiently good shots. First he took the permanent "Welcome to Toc H" sign at the entrance to the Camp. The Harrison children were bouncing on their beds in the library, clad in their night clothes. Christopher was dubious about his nightshirt. He was accustomed to pyjamas he said, but he was assured that even grown up men sometimes preferred nightshirts; it seems that at four one shrinks from looking childish. It happened that their room had all the evening sun, and Colin Wills and the photographer from *Illustrated* were quick to seize the opportunity of recording the extremely domestic scene.

Unlimited kindness

Sergeant Brown and his wife and boy came back from the town with their purchases just at that moment so they were also "taken" for television. And so it went on—personal calmness, bustle, unlimited kindness. Late that night a number of the parents and helpers gathered round the tea urn talking of their experiences, Brigadier and Mrs. Lucas among them. There were no complaints, no discernible self-pity. The French in Algiers had been marvellous and so had the people in H.M.S. *Triumph*. All the guests commented on everyone else's kindness and hosts and guests shared one thought "Thank God the sea was calm and that it didn't happen at night—otherwise—well!" The sentence was seldom finished, for having helped the mothers put those grand children to bed one shrank from filling in the picture in any greater detail. The only time, apparently, when the mothers betrayed their feelings was at the moment when, on the crest of a wave, their babies were thrown from the ship's boats to the men on the rescue ships. Only one baby (possibly two) was dropped into the sea but it was pulled out again quickly and afterwards seemed none the worse. The next day, Wednesday, our families were collected at regular intervals and taken to the airport where a constant succession of planes took off for England. On Thursday Gibraltar in general returned to normal. As always in a great emergency, the kindness and unselfishness in human nature had transcended all baser human traits. Toc H had well played its own small part in the whole operation. But after all, what would you expect?

G.M.

SUGGESTED EMBLEM FOR TOC H RUISLIP



This lovely bird of plumage rare
 flew into this room one night,
 Such wondrous beauty made us stare,
 We wondered if we saw aright,
 Those chickenborn feet on duck-like body,
 That waddling gait pleased everybody,
 That glorious bill so strong and stout
 Keeping want and women out,
 Hail! feathered friend, we give thee greeting,
 We welcome you at our Toc H Meeting,
 But, be thou short-legged stork or penguin sparrow,
 or ruddy, red-backed shrike from neighbouring Harrow,
 Your strength will help us shield the weak,
 like that fat mouse at thy feet,
 No can join the family,
 which now numbers thirty-three,
 We feed them well and let them be,
 They run about everywhere, quite at ease,
 So, here's our hand of friendship for evermore,
 Come! let us shake you by the claw,
 We welcome thee, Friend and Brother to be,
 Thou'lt be initiated at our Ceremony,
 They say, "birds of a feather flock together,"
 Then you'll be pals with us for ever,
 We'll quack and we'll chatter and sing as we go,
 With our mascot the not-so-dead DODO - DO.

 If we strive for beauty within as well as without,
 Then we sha'n't have much to grumble about. - Shantalla.

Lifted from Ruislip Branch notice-board

Multum in Parvo

~or much in little

❖ THIS MONTH the Lincolnshire Rally is being held at Lincoln and the London Sports Meeting at Battersea Park on May 8, the East Midlands Festival at Leicester on May 22.

❖ And so to Chatsworth Park, Derbyshire, on WHIT MONDAY.

❖ CYRIL CATTELL is now Area Secretary in Kent and Sussex.

❖ BRIAN LYNES will leave for Australia in June to become Secretary of Toc H in Queensland.

❖ Padre ALEX DUFF, North and East London, asked to be released from his staff appointment in April. Our thanks and best wishes to him.

❖ The Rev. KENNETH C. OLIVER will be leaving the Canal Zone in June to become Senior Chaplain of the Brigade of Guards, London District.

❖ Visitors to Britain from overseas include Canon R. G. GIBBON (Salisbury, S. Rhodesia), PAT MOXEY (Buenos Aires) and ALAN COWLING (Adelaide, Australia).

❖ The CENTRAL EXECUTIVE for the new year of office will be appointed by the Central Council at the annual meeting on May 15-16. These members are *not* standing for re-election: Major-General Sir COLIN JARDINE (Alton, Hants.), W. A. B. LAIDLAW (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) and J. McCLENAHAN (St. Albans).

❖ The present CENTRAL COUNCILLORS go out of office on June 2 and are eligible for re-election. Branches have been asked to nominate candidates for the 1954-56 Council by May 31.

❖ The Officers of DISTRICT TEAMS now coming into office are asked to arrange for Branch representatives to meet their present Central Councillors soon after May 16.

❖ That Member who is moving to new work or a new home: Has he been commended?

❖ That Member who moved here: Has he been welcomed?

'Old House' at Cairo

TO THOSE OF US who served with the 'M.E.F.' in and around the Cairo area during the 'Hitler' war there will always be the pleasant memories of 'Talbot House' on Soliman Pasha Street. We held the house in great affection, it was indeed to us "the old house", having within it the endearing qualities that were born and fostered and grew to such great fruition in World War One at Poperinghe. Situated in the Egyptian capital it breathed on us with a welcome freshness; an oasis in the heat, turmoil and odious smells of an eastern city. In 'Talbot House', if only for a short space of time, a man could live a little nearer the pattern of sweet reasonableness which his Creator had intended.

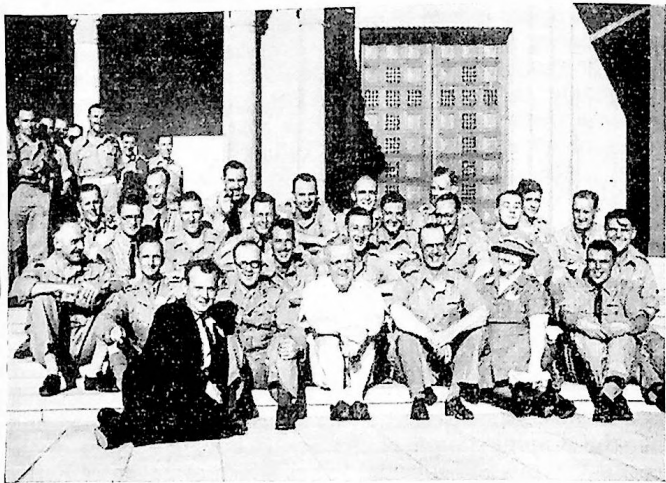
Eight years have passed since one left Cairo. During this time there has been a feeling at varying intervals that something should be written in appreciation of 'Toc H' in the Middle East, and particularly of the Cairo House.

From the point of view of the serving man and woman the success of the 'Talbot Houses' in the various commands abroad was no small matter, let it be recorded here and now that the administration of the Toc H hostels was one of the most satisfying and splendid things which came out of Forces welfare work. The depth and warmth of the people who 'managed' these places was always something to be admired and wondered at. One of the most outstanding and loved personalities at Cairo's 'Talbot House' was our matron and housekeeper Mrs. Gould. Under her guidance the house was perfectly run, the dining room in particular being an especial joy with its snow white table cloths, serviettes, flowers and glistening cutlery. The lounge too was a wonderfully restful place where a man could sink into the settee or armchairs and enjoy to the very utmost the complete serenity of pipe and tobacco.

From a musical standpoint Toc H in Cairo was influenced in many ways by the famous 'Music for All Club' which was honoured by the B.B.C., who named one of their programmes after it. Musical director in charge of 'Music for All' was a young R.A.F. Flight Sergeant, named Clifford Harker, loaned

for special duty by G.H.Q. At the present time Mr. Harker is organist and master of the choristers at Bristol Cathedral. Clifford often looked in at "Soliman Pasha" in between his work at the music club and his duties at the modern Anglican Cathedral of All Saints where he was organist and choirmaster.

Musical appreciation among H.M. Forces in Cairo was great indeed, due to the combining factors of the 'Cathedral'



Toc H members, with 'TUBBY' in centre, on the steps of Cairo Cathedral at the Middle East Rally, May 9, 1944

and "Music for All". This enthusiasm was catered for by way of the various gramophone clubs which sprang up at most canteens, and 'Talbot House' was well established in this direction.

With the halting of Rommel's Afrika Corps by Montgomery's Eighth Army in the Western desert and the subsequent theatres of war getting further and further north, away from the city, Cairo became an important centre for Forces leave. At this stage 'Talbot House' itself could no longer hope to provide for the non-resident. The restaurant and snack bar trade had to be catered for elsewhere, and this proved to be a grand opportunity for the Cairo group. The basement was requisitioned and after decorations and neces-

sary structural alterations had been made it was opened to the 'public' on New Year's Day, 1944. Henceforth it became known as 'The-Hole-in-the-Wall' and was an immediate and lasting success, a Forces club and canteen for all ranks, serviced by the Forces for the Forces.

The acquisition of the 'Hole-in-the-Wall' meant that the Cairo Toc H group was able to extend many of its activities and take on new ones. As managers of the new canteen they were making bigger contacts and consistently getting new ideas to keep the group a real live unit.

On Saturday evenings the group Secretary arranged party outings to the cinema, Ensa theatre, or the Opera House. This was particularly appreciated by many of those who were staying in the 'House'.

In retrospect one feels a nostalgic, if detached loss at the untimely passing of such places as Shephard's Hotel. The Turf Club, The Metro Cinema and the renowned Groppie's restaurant. These were the landmarks within the city streets standing together with 'The Old House' which made "our" Cairo.

J.H.W.

OTHONA COMMUNITY, 1954

The following speakers have agreed to attend

During week	Speaker	Theme
June 26th	OPENING SESSION	Work
July 3rd	GEORGE MACLEOD	The Community and Today
July 10th	(awaiting confirmation)	
July 17th	(awaiting confirmation)	
July 24th	HERBERT LEGGATE	One World
July 31st	LEONARD MORRISON	Prayer
August 7th	OLIVER WILKINSON	Interpretation
August 14th	TOM DRIERG	Responsibility
August 21st	(awaiting confirmation)	
August 28th	JIM WILSON	Healing
September 4th	CLOSING SESSION	Work

Dr. E. V. Rieu and Dr. H. Holland will also be speaking.

All applications to attend should be sent to—Norman Motley, 47 Francis Street, London, S.W.1.

(N.B. When booking or making enquiries please enclose a stamped, addressed, envelope.)

Fate, TV and the 'Barber'

FATE plays some peculiar tricks. Mr. Eric Woodhouse, a railwayman, is a member of the Lynn Branch of Toc H and, as with all of their members, derives a great deal of pleasure from giving his leisure time in social service. Some long time ago, hearing that patients at Lynn General Hospital were finding the services of a barber difficult to obtain, he decided to spend his Sunday mornings at the hospital in that capacity.

As he shaved his 'clients' he found that a number expressed a desire to pay for the service. His, however, was voluntary work, so it was decided that at the hospital there should be a 'Toc H box' into which, those who wished, could put a contribution.

Television

The money, in due course, mounted until, when there was something like £26 in the box, discussions took place about how it should be spent. Naturally, Mr. Woodhouse was consulted and it was at his instigation that it was decided to provide television for the old people of St. James's Hospital.

Readers will recall how two TV sets were bought by Toc H and installed at St. James's in time for the Coronation. The total cost, by the way, was just over £204 and I am happy to report that Toc H have now completed paying for them—thanks to the generosity of a number of people in the town.

. . . and the 'Barber'

Now we come to the stage in the story where fate takes a hand. Several weeks back Mr. Woodhouse, cycling home from work, was in an accident with a vehicle. He went first to the General Hospital, where on Sunday mornings he had been barber and in the afternoons had assisted other Branch members to organise visiting arrangements for patients, and was later transferred to St. James's Hospital.

And at St. James's his bed is next to the television set, and it has fallen to his lot to turn it off and on! I'm told he thinks television is a good thing—especially for patients in hospital.

Eastern Evening News.

The Elder Brethren

ARNOLD.—On February 17, EDWARD ARNOLD, aged 80, a founder member of Leatherhead Branch. Elected 1.1.'42.

CAMPBELL.—On March 6, Colonel IAN MAXWELL CAMPBELL, C.B.E., T.D., aged 83, a member of Central General Branch. Elected 1.7.'24.

CHAPLIN.—On March 5, HERBERT SAMUEL CHAPLIN ('Admiral'), aged 74, a founder member of Faversham Branch. Elected 12.7.'33.

CHILD.—On January 24, after four days' illness, the Rev. WILLIAM BARNICOT CHILD, aged 45, the Padre of Beaufort West Group, Southern Africa, and a former member of Wakefield Branch. Elected 3.5.'33.

COE.—On January 9, GEORGE RUPERT COE, aged 78, a member of Cheriton Branch. Elected 1.5.'44.

DIBDEN.—On March 13, as the result of an accident, FRANK DIBDEN, aged 45, a member of Weybridge Branch. Elected 18.11.'37.

EATON.—On March 12, HAROLD EDWARD EATON, aged 52, a member of Park Street & Frogmore Branch. Elected 15.9.'48.

FRENCH.—On December 24, the Rev. EDWARD WILSON FRENCH, a member of Pocklington Branch. Elected 7.11.'47.

HITCHENS.—On February 26, FRANK HITCHENS, aged 81, a member of Falmouth Branch. Elected 1.1.'39.

KELLETT.—On February 21, WILLIAM KELLETT, aged 60, a founder member of Morecambe Branch. Elected 26.3.'26.

KENYON.—On March 14, GEORGE KENYON, aged 75, a member of Altrincham Branch. Elected 9.2.'49.

MARTIN.—On February 26, the Rev. JOSIAH MARTIN, aged 72, Padre of Bedhampton (Hants.) Branch. Elected 13.2.'52.

OWEN.—On February 13, the result of an accident, DAVID JOHN OWEN, aged 33, a member of Poole Branch. Elected 12.8.'47.

PACEY.—On March 12, GEORGE R. PACEY, a founder member of Grantham Branch. Elected 1.1.'23.

PARSONS.—On March 3, ALFRED PARSONS, aged 66, a member of Wisbech Branch. Elected 1.10.'53.

ROBINSON.—On February 24, WALTER WILLIAM ROBINSON, aged 73, a member of Harlow Branch. Elected 28.11.'50.

SAMUELS.—On February 19, WILLIAM GEORGE ROBERT SAMUELS, aged 50, a member of Southall Branch. Elected 14.8.'47.

SANDS.—On March 1, ERNEST S. SANDS, aged 69, a founder member of Wem Branch. Elected 23.7.'35.

STANILAND.—On March 6, JOHN STANILAND ('Johnny'), aged 35, a member of Whitstable Branch. Elected 1.4.'48.

VIOLET.—On March 27, FREDERICK JOHN VIOLET, aged 70, a founder member of Mold Branch. Elected 29.3.'33.

WIDLAKE.—On March 10, FRANK WIDLAKE, aged 57, a member of Skewen Branch. Elected 16.3.'49.

*Destination
A
monthly link*



*Pondering
with
The Old House*

THE OLD HOUSE COMMITTEE is anxious to help all members and friends who would like to visit the Old House this year, and has provided party leaders for most Saturdays from May 29 to August 28. The cost of the fare from London to Ostend will vary according to the size of the party, but in any case will not exceed £5 10s. 0d. This allows for individual return at any time up to two months, thus enabling visitors to stay for as long or as short a period as they wish, and to travel elsewhere on the Continent.

The Committee has also arranged for Wardens to be in residence from Whitsun to September and they will be pleased to offer advice or help of any kind to those who need it. Also, it is now possible to have breakfast and light meals in the House which considerably reduces the cost of living over there. Please send your enquiries (as soon as possible please) to: Mrs. A. Tett, Newlands, Money Hill Road, Rickmansworth, Herts. (Tel: Rickmansworth 3740.)

"Pass, Friend"

AFTER NEARLY TEN YEARS called by the courtesy name of 'peace' it would be interesting to know what remains of the war-time Toc H contacts between prisoners of war—both of our members as 'hosts' in this country and of our members as 'guests' in enemy hands. There are certainly cases in which acquaintance after such unpromising introductions has ripened into friendship, a friendship which has involved whole families on both sides of the Channel and has led to an exchange of visits. There are other cases (Wimborne Branch is a good example) in which Toc H members or units gave ready service to German prisoners in a local camp and made some real friends only to

lose them when they were repatriated behind the Iron Curtain, out of reach of a handshake or free correspondence.

In some instances prisoners of war in this country were able to take part regularly in Toc H meetings and activities; they learnt what it meant and came to love it. This shines out, for example, from a letter in which a German teacher in the Ruhr writes to a member in the Midlands describing his celebration of Christmas, the time to think particularly of friends. After telling of the Nativity play in his school and the Christmas tree in his own home he goes on:—

I thought back of you, Skipper, and of Toc H at Coalville, too. I do know again and again that I found the fundamentals of Christianity in your stable and I am still thankful to Our Lord that He led me over to Coalville. And that is the greatest experience I brought back home out of your country. I do hope you meet still in the same old spot every Tuesday night for fellowship, taking the Ceremony of Light at 8 o'clock, and conclude your meetings with Family Prayers as I know them. Often I tell my pupils of those hours, and I feel they understand what I try to teach them . . . I shall think of my "Toc H home" for my lifetime.

There may well be other members with similar tales they would like to tell in our correspondence pages. B.B.

Try it for a change...

and you'll buy it as a habit...

HARDEN'S TEA

HARDEN'S CEYLON TEA 5/4 per lb. ● HARDEN'S GREEN LABEL TEA 5/8 per lb.
HARDEN'S CHINA & EMPIRE BLEND 6/- per lb.
HARDEN'S DARJEELING TEA 6/8 per lb. ● HARDEN'S PURE CHINA TEA 8/8 per lb.

Formerly known as the famous **DOCTOR** Tea and still blended by Harden Bros. & Lindsay Ltd., 121 Cannon Street, E.C.4

If you experience difficulty in obtaining Harden's Tea, write for the name and address of your nearest stockist.

Rediscovering Toc H

5—*The Branch as a Family*

“**WE GO**” says Mr. Squeers in Dickens’s novel “upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When a boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it”. Well, we now know “out of book” about Fellowship. Service, Fairmindedness and the Kingdom of God—what do we go and do?

The question is important, because there is nothing uncommon about the principles of Toc H and there are innumerable other bodies of people, including the Churches themselves, whose objects are exactly the same. Any justification there may be for another one can only lie in the particular methods which it uses to put its principles into practice. The methods, the organisation, the machinery, the rules—these things are important not for their own sake but because they form the tool-kit which we, as craftsmen in Toc H, use for our work. He is a poor craftsman who doesn’t understand his tools.

Atmosphere and relationships

Today one thinks of Toc H mainly in terms of Branches, but its first manifestation after 1918 was a hostel or chum-mery. The promoters no doubt hoped that “Mark I” would crack as loudly and aim as straight as the Army rifle after which they named it; and one gathers that in its own way, it did. To its inmates it was a real ‘home’ and in it they shared without distinction in a true family life. Other Marks followed but they were quickly outstripped in numbers by men for whom it was not convenient or possible to live together in the full sense and who therefore founded Branches. They too aimed at the atmosphere and relationship which we find in the true Christian home—the mutual love and loyalty which survives all disagreements and separations, the

easy give and take of daily life, the underlying united purpose and the joy of keeping open house, of being "given to hospitality". That is why the word *family* is so often used to describe Toc H. Those who say that we are not a true family because the men and the women run their Branches separately have missed the point.

Our Branches have been built up largely from the family angle, as it were; hence our habit of keeping the circle comparatively small so that the members may know each other as intimately as possible; hence the strict unwritten rule which forbids us to let differences of opinion be aired outside, or to bring into the family circle any disagreements which may have taken place elsewhere; hence, too, the cup of tea and the biscuit which is so much more than an ice-breaking device—it is the symbol of the family sitting down together to a meal, without which there would be no real home-life at all. We are not expected to abandon our own convictions but to respect and appreciate those of others and, however hotly discussion may rage, friendship remains unbroken. This has become a Toc H tradition and although it has come about almost by accident it is a notable one. By taking it with them into their work, into public life and into all kinds of service members can make a valuable contribution in many walks of life, for this is one of the secrets of making peace.

Pilots and Padres

As we have already seen, there is more in all this than building up a fellowship for ourselves. The desire to share it with others and to harness its goodwill in service for our neighbours has caused the family of Toc H to evolve some other methods of its own. There is the Pilot, for instance, who is specially charged with helping newcomers to the Branch to grasp what we are aiming at and, as his name implies, with keeping the 'ship' clear of rocks and shoals. A Pilot should never attempt to duplicate the functions of a Padre, but he can be a very useful link between the Padre and those who don't want one! As for the Padre himself, he is much more than a chaplain who comes in from outside occasionally to say prayers. He is first and foremost a member of Toc H—one of the boys, as it were—and anything he says or does comes not from the platform but from the floor. He has the unique opportunity (for a clergyman) of being 'off parade' amongst fellow-men who will take from

him in their Branch room what they would never listen to in his church. If he is wise he will not always say their prayers for them but will teach them how to pray for themselves.

Jobmastery

Another officer unique to Toc H is the Jobmaster, the Branch's leader in the adventures of service. In this capacity his chief requirement will be the quality of imagination and this is what we ought first to look for when he is being chosen. What the Branch requires is someone who has the insight to perceive people's real needs and how they may be helped through the practical goodwill of the members. He will also be an organiser for which he will want as intimate a knowledge of his men as he can acquire. The skilful Jobby rarely appeals for volunteers; he prefers to pick his men and challenge them personally, often with things which at first may seem to them too hard, for he will see in them not only what they are but what they could become. Only if he knows them well can he avoid overworking the willing horse. Nowadays the proportion of married men in Toc H is high; the Jobby should take great care that his demands do not lead them to give him time which ought to be spent with their wives and children. There is something wrong when the latter think of Toc H only as Daddy's hobby which is always taking him away from them. 'Jobmastery' is a craft in itself and it calls for a good deal more study and training than it generally seems to get.

'Family Council'

To know the members well is the first duty of all the officers, who between them form the Branch Executive or 'Family Council'. Besides being the means of preventing too much time at Branch meetings being spent on business, they have a duty to think and plan ahead and to be concerned with the quality of Branch life. They will guide and help the Programme Secretary and not leave that responsibility with him alone. It is their high privilege to elect new members of the world-wide Movement of Toc H and to ensure that Probationers, or Apprentices as some Branches now call them, are being helped to understand the obligations they are undertaking. They will not forget that during the period of apprenticeship the Movement is on trial as well as the man.

Stern fathers are out of fashion nowadays but a live Branch Executive is essentially a paternal body, the head of the household, guiding its life and watching affectionately over young and old, present and absent members. Happy is the Branch which has an Executive like this, for it will be a true Christian family.

M.B.E.

Branch Banners

AN OUTSTANDING FEATURE at most Toc H Rallies and Festivals is the procession of Banners of the Branches. Much care is given to the designing and craftsmanship of these Branch "visiting cards" and they are often real works of art. Following the suggestion made in our recent Readers' Quiz competition, here is the commencement of a representative selection and we are sorry that it is not possible to portray them in their warm, glowing colours.

I. FOLKESTONE



The main part of the design is a copy of the XIII century seal used by the Barons of Folkestone, the inscription reading *Sigill Baronum Folkestanie*. Its centre depicts a ship pooped at both ends and would seem to have been used on most of the seals of the Cinque Ports, of which Folkestone is a 'limb'. Authority for its use on the banner was granted to the Branch by the Mayor and Aldermen of Folkestone.

Other Branches are invited to send a clear photograph, glossy finish if possible, together with brief details of their own Banner for inclusion in this series.

Branch Briefs from all quarters

◆ The blood bank started by BRISTOL in 1934, last year collected 48,000 pints, bringing the tally up to date to 1,105,952 pints.

◆ St. HELEN'S (Lancs.) have completed a scheme for relaying Rugby League football commentaries to patients in five local hospitals.

◆ A growing congregation has resulted from a series of five Sunday evening film services at Watling Congregational Church. The films were projected by members of MILL HILL Film Unit.

◆ So many patients asked "What is Toc H?" that EASTBOURNE recently held their meeting in a ward of the local hospital.

◆ The National Institute for the Blind received the sum of £112 4s. 9d.; the result of an effort organised by CHELTENHAM.

◆ Over 100 members and friends shared in HARTLEY WINTNEY'S Silver Jubilee celebrations.

◆ 300 guests, all over sixty years old, attended the ninth annual party arranged by CORSHAM for members of the Older Folk's Club. A strong team has also been entered for the local six-a-side knockout cricket competition.

◆ A resolution "That party politics in local government are not in the public interest" was debated by TAUNTON and WELLINGTON at a recent joint meeting.

◆ A door-to-door collection undertaken by LONGTON (Carlisle) raised £19 7s. 6d. for St. Dunstan's.

◆ Working by torch-light, NEWENT members dismantled a dangerous fence in their local recreation ground.

◆ A Methodist, a Catholic and a Jew led a discussion on "You and your neighbour" at a recent MAIDENHEAD Guest-night.

◆ A village hall is being built by COMPTON, who meet on the site and have recruited a new member—a carpenter.

◆ Two Fêtes are to be held in the Surrey Area. The first will be on May 22 and covers EAST SURREY (Hogsmill and Mole Districts) at Winfield, Epsom Road, Leatherhead. The second will be on May 29 at Farnham Castle covering WEST SURREY AND WEY Districts. Both commence at 2.30 p.m.

Warden Manor 21st Birthday

A BITTER COLD WIND is blowing but it hasn't the power to chill the spirits of the folk happily greeting each other outside the church, the Toc H church of All Hallows-by-the-Tower. Inside it is warm and rapidly filling up with the friends who are meeting here to thank God for their friendship and for the means by which it is achieved; for Warden Manor, a symbol, a solid man-built symbol God-blessed.

The service is a simple thanksgiving and yet something so much more than simple; the singing full and robust bursting from the hearts of all. The Padre in his address skilfully blending the past and the future so that even a stranger can understand, for I am a stranger. The Founder Padre of Toc H in his prayers gathering his 'children' to him. After the service he takes us into the greater part of the church which is once again rising proudly to the skies after its partial destruction by bombs, to let us see how the work of reconstruction is progressing.

Order out of chaos

Out into the cold once more, but with even more chatter as the late comers discover their friends and so in disorderly order across to 42 Trinity Square. Here is seeming chaos as two hundred people crowd into a not very big hall. The noise is deafening as everyone is trying hard to talk to everyone else at the same time, and it is only the deepness of the voices that shows that this is an adult meeting and not a children's party. A bell clangs—sounds like the Navy—and there is silence while instructions are given for the obtaining of refreshment. Out of chaos comes order as groups sort themselves into queues and then seat themselves at the tables. Order, but not quiet, for the chattering is not stilled by the fact of eating.

Again the bell clangs and an important announcement is made. "Vic is going to cut the cake", for this is a birthday party, a Twenty-first, not of a person but a symbol. After this more chatter, the men move the tables out of sight and we are ready to be entertained and perhaps rest our voices for a while. The entertainment is robust and decidedly

merry and the audience loves it and joins in heartily with singing and applause.

More bell clanging, again silence, and now a unique ceremony. 'Sherrifs' are to be created and the heralds enter the room in a slow and dignified manner followed by the new Sherrifs, their rank denoted by the flash on their shoulder and the two white feathers in their berets. They take their oath with solemn dignity, their voices firm and clear, their bearing proud, their shoulders square.

Now—what on earth is a pirate, complete with galley pot of rum doing here?—Oh well, anything can happen at this gathering. He is proposing a toast to Vic and Bill who have worked so hard to make this symbol a warm living thing. A reply from Vic—gosh, can he talk—easily, flowingly the stories of the past are told and although much is left out for lack of time yet the present is linked with it without a gap. Vic could talk all night and neither he nor his hearers would be tired, for he lives his stories and we are with him all the way.

Once again the bell—I'll never get used to it, or will I?—this time to separate those who are to see the Ceremony of the Keys from the less fortunate who just have to go home; but, before we go there is one important thing—a moment of prayer, of thanksgiving for this day—out of noise and bustle there is silence, deep sincere silence as heads are bowed and thoughts are stilled.

And now with cries of goodbye, see you again soon, the hall is quickly emptied and the folks wend their way home.

I was a stranger in this crowd and was able to watch and listen to all that was happening around me, yet I was not alone, for no one could be lost or lonely with these folk around them. Their very cheerfulness catches you up and carries you along with it. Though you may speak to but one or two yet it is only lack of time that denies you closer contact, for how can two hundred people all talk together within the space of a few hours? Nor is there time for polite introductions, for there is nothing formal about such a gathering and for this reason, if no other, the stranger is not a stranger siting stiffly on the edge of a chair, but a watcher relaxed, at ease and at one with the gathering.

I was a stranger, and the emphasis is on the word 'was'.

E.B.

A Bag of Books

If unable to obtain any book reviewed in these pages from your local bookseller please contact Toc H Publications Dept. Where the cost of books is more than some members can afford, they can often be obtained through their local Public Library.

QUAKERS AT WAR

The Grace of Forgetting. By Geoffrey Winthrop Young.
(Country Life. 21s.)

The author's profession has been in education, as a master at Eton, an Inspector of Schools and a don at London University, but the life of action has always called him strongly. He is, therefore, best known as a mountaineer and President of the Alpine Club. Midway between being an athlete at Cambridge and becoming one of the founders of the Outward Bound Movement come the adventures which make the most interesting pages of this autobiography. After charming chapters on the Thames and travel in the Middle East the book comes abruptly up against 1914 and the pace quickens.

Being over military age, Winthrop Young at once crossed the Channel as war correspondent of the *Daily News* and had his fill of exciting work in the opening weeks of the war. But very soon, back in England, he came upon the Friends' Ambulance Unit in training, joined it and embarked for France with its first contingent. Before they reached port they were in action, rescuing the crew of the cruiser *Hermes*, the first Naval casualty of the war by enemy submarine. On arrival at Dunkirk they found the quay a shambles with the wounded from the Yser battle lying about everywhere. Thus the young Quakers were committed at once to that selfless and efficient service which they were to carry out upon every fighting front.

Two points of view

The rest of the story is played out in two settings, and the first of them is Ypres, the ancient city in the earliest throes of its four years' agony. The picture is presented here from an unfamiliar angle, not from the point of view of the fighting British soldier, the 'Old Contemptible', but of the Belgian

civilian under bombardment. And the two points of view were not easy to reconcile, for the soldier and the civilian both had urgent but conflicting needs and were bound to get in one another's way. Hence when the military authorities are mentioned in these chapters it is, as often as not, with exasperation. Fighting men had their duty and so had the young 'conchies' in the Friends' Ambulance. From the moment they set foot in France they maintained, for instance, the principle of tending the most urgent cases first regardless of nationality—and on the quay at Dunkirk it happened that many of these were German. "Conflict resulted", writes Winthrop Young, "and this nearly ended our work at its beginning." It was not the last time that stubborn behaviour was to get him and his team into trouble.

After much negotiation with British, French and Belgian authorities the Ambulance unit was allowed to start work in Ypres. They arrived in time to catch sight of the city in its mediæval beauty; they lived in it long enough to see it dissolve round them in flame and ruin. Their hospital ward was in the vast red brick Asylum, just outside Ypres on the Poperinghe road—still remembered as a billet by First War survivors. But the true centre of their many activities in the town was the convent of St. Marie in the Lille Road—three years later, as a ruin, to serve as *Little Talbot House*!

Valiant partners

From the outset they had valiant partners. From Poperinghe, to which the British had evacuated them, the Quakers brought back nuns of the Nursing Sisterhood of Ypres—"vigorous, broad-shouldered, humorous, compassionate Flemish women, caring for nothing but work, and full of fun." The whole effort was moulded by the leadership of Father Charles Delaere, priest of St. Peter's, the oldest parish church in Ypres, a man of truly heroic character. And beside him, his indomitable lieutenant, stood a young nun of St. Marie, still remembered under the honoured name of 'Sister Marguerite of Ypres'.

Officially the citizens had been evacuated but many had stowed themselves away in cellars to protect their possessions from looting. The immediate task of the Ambulance was to deal with civilian casualties on the spot and to evacuate them as it became possible. In the Asylum they dealt, from first to

last, with over seven hundred seriously wounded Belgians, many of them women and children. Their friendship with many of their patients was close and prolonged. They were concerned, for instance, with the setting up of homes in the 'back areas' for the evacuated orphan children of Ypres. In Poperinghe, where the Friends Ambulance at that time ran the Elizabeth Hospital, they opened a school in which Winthrop Young found free moments to teach the boys football. This was not all, for when the long-drawn battles in the Salient reached their periods of intensity the Friends, held at arm's length by the R.A.M.C. in quieter times, were in full demand as dressers and drivers in the field for British wounded. They lived at full stretch an active, unobtrusive life which had its casualties and its own rewards. They lived it always against the background of the City, desperately stricken day by day but imperishable in its courage and pride, and in the radiant company of Father Delaere, Sister Marguerite and their Belgian colleagues.

If the Ypres battlefield always has touch with Toc H history, the second scene of Winthrop Young's war-time adventure, which fills the final chapters of this book, has not. Late in 1915 he took his unit of the Friends Ambulance to the Isonzo front to work with the Italian Army. Here their service was even more exacting: before the end of the war they carried 177,000 in their ambulances and were awarded many decorations for gallantry. Winthrop Young himself lost a leg and has since climbed no more mountains. Thus crippled but still serving he went through the disastrous Italian retreat at Caporetto, which brought Lord Plumer and the British Second Army down from Ypres to restore the situation. At Ypres Plumer had already had occasion more than once to commend the Friends' Ambulance, and he is one of the few British officers of whom Winthrop Young has no criticism. Brave men do not always thus respect each other.

B.B.

RACIAL RUPTIONS

Colour Prejudice in Britain. By Anthony H. Richmond. (Routledge & Kegan Paul. 18s. 0d.)

Many people in Britain have never spoken to a Negro. This is not really surprising for until recently the Negro population was concentrated in four of the main ports. But

their number is continually growing, and inhabitants of many industrial centres are becoming increasingly aware that they have some stiff problems of racial relations on their own doorsteps. An instance of this was seen in the recent dispute in Birmingham concerned with the employment of coloured workers on the Corporation buses.

In places where they are few in number the difficulties that arise, both in employment and social contacts, are not likely to be acute. But as their number increases so racial prejudices are unleashed and, just as in the southern States of America, the greatest prejudice against the coloured people is demonstrated by the 'poor whites'. Often, too, as a result of his experiences, the coloured man becomes disheartened and disillusioned and is sometimes more than ready to combat 'insults', both real and imagined.

This book deals with the assimilation and adjustment of some three hundred West Indian Negroes in Liverpool over a period of approximately ten years, and traces their relationships with the white people with whom they came in contact. Mr. Richmond, the author, is a member of the Society of Friends whose traditional concern for social justice and for human right has inspired much of his work. This result of his first hand researches has provided a social document of the utmost importance to all who would wish to try and understand more fully the complexities of racial relations.

C.



*Where there's cooking
there's*



Open Hustings

Letters to The Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on all matters concerning Toc H. For reasons of space the right is reserved to shorten letters received, but every effort is made to print a representative selection.

'B.B.'

DEAR EDITOR,

I can think of no better expression of appreciation of Barkis's services as Editor of the JOURNAL, and indeed for all his services for Toc H than that of Tubby's in acknowledging subscriptions in response to his recent appeal, if I may be allowed to borrow it—"We thank God for you". Long may Barkis be spared to serve and inspire us.

With this goes sincere good wishes to our new Editor.

JACK B. FISHER.

Stowmarket.

Open to all?

DEAR EDITOR,

I heard a Toc H speaker the other evening say "I would welcome a man into Toc H irrespective of his beliefs or lack of them". I wonder whether this really fits in with the policy of Toc H? It certainly is a subject for keen discussion on the part of Areas and Branches. A great deal of interest has been shown in the case of the Boy Scout who because of his Communist

interests was asked to cease his membership of the Scout movement. Can Toc H take the same line?

Toc H is based on principles of Christian belief. Our Elder Brother said, "He that is not with me is against me". Are we in danger that by taking a let 'em all come line, we are confusing liberty and licence? The speaker did say in defence that our job is to 'infiltrate outwards'—what he means, I think, is that having got a chap there, you are more likely to attract him to your way of thinking. This of course works both ways.

There are several kinds of Communist, but all kinds appear to be first cousins of each other, in that religion is held to be the sop to a decadent society, and belief in God is escapism which Karl Marx condemned. The point at issue is this. "Can you be a member of Toc H, and have no belief at all?" You can do jobs for others quite easily without a Faith, but is Faith the essential thing? I believe it is. The cry these days is that organised religion has failed. Is it true, or is it true to say that we have failed. All this sort of thing is

tioned up with the question, "Can we admit a chap as a member of Toc H we know to have an atheistic viewpoint?"

N. J. WOODHALL.

*Chelsfield Rectory,
Nr. Farnborough, Kent.*

Toc H Prayer

DEAR EDITOR,

As I read Dudley Matthews' note in the March JOURNAL ending with the words of the prayer for all friendships in Toc H, my mind jumped back more than forty years, to the night when I first heard that prayer (differing slightly and of course without the words Toc H) in the loft of an erstwhile sweet-stuff factory in the slums of Oxford. For it was—and is—the club prayer of the Balliol College Boys Club, written for it either by Keith Rae (whose cross at Hooghe must be known to many who have visited the Old House) or by his great friend Stephen Reiss, killed near Loos in 1915. Every wartime number of the club magazine carried the words of that prayer to its members overseas, many of whom must have known Talbot House. A great many letters home testified that the unseen chain became to them something very real. And it still is. Before me as I write is a plaque recently designed by an old member, a former Great Western engineman and no mean potter. At the base of the shield he has depicted a few links of chain, as if holding the whole together, and no member of the Balliol Club needs to be told

their meaning. All this of course provides no reason why Toc H should not have adapted and should not use that prayer. But I think members the world over may feel that it means even more to them when they know how it came into being and may like sometimes to remember the little club, still active, to which they owe it.

HUBERT SECRETAN.

London, S.E.22.

Brighter Branches

DEAR EDITOR,

I am sure it would be a practical step in the right direction for Branches to make special efforts to clean and brighten their meeting places. I know that many meet in rooms which are not their own, but even then there must be much that can be done to make the room on the meeting night more attractive and more obviously a place where Toc H is *at home* for the evening. Dust, dirt and general untidiness are not conducive to a friendly and inspiring atmosphere. When the room belongs to the Branch then there can be no excuse for an unattractive appearance or lack of some homely comforts (mats, curtains, pictures, etc.). A well-stocked and well-used Toc H library should also be part of every Unit's equipment and a conveniently placed Notice Board, free of old and tattered notices. Finally the meeting place ought to be clearly sign-posted.

DOUG. GREEN.

Tottenham, N.17.